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Restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields

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Implementation of General Assembly resolutions 50/227 and 52/12 B

Restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. Introduction

1. The present report responds to Economic and Social Council resolution 1999/1 of 2 February 1999 in which the Council looked forward to the annual progress report of the Secretary-General on the further implementation of General Assembly resolution 50/227 of 24 May 1996 and 52/12 B of 19 December 1997 and Council resolution 1998/46 of 31 July 1998, to be submitted to the Council at its substantive session of 1999. The Council, in its resolution 1998/46, had also decided to continue its deliberations on pending issues concerning the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields. The mandate, as set forth in Assembly resolution 45/264 of 13 May 1991, annex, sect. IV (5), for an annual progress report of the Secretary-General on restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields is also covered in this report. As a result, the report is addressed to both the Assembly and the Council, with the latter being invited to focus on those aspects of the report that fall within its competence.

2. In section II of this report, a number of recommendations are made for consideration by the Economic and Social Council with respect to the further implementation of the various provisions of General Assembly resolution 50/227 and Council resolution 1998/46. Section III provides information on efforts made by the Assembly and the Council in implementing relevant provisions of the resolutions. The status of implementation of Assembly resolution 50/227 and Council resolution 1998/46 is provided in a dual-column layout; the left-side column contains paragraphs of the resolutions that call for action; the right-side column presents the status of follow-up corresponding to each action-oriented paragraph. The paragraphs of annex I to Assembly resolution 50/227 that specifically address the Executive Boards of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)/United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Food Programme (WFP) (paras. 76–78) are treated in section IV in order to provide the Council with a clear comparison of these Executive Boards in respect of their implementation of those paragraphs which concern primarily their working methods.

3. The previous report of the Secretary-General on restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields presented to the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1998 (A/53/137–E/1998/66) provided information on the status of the implementation of the provisions of General Assembly resolution 50/227 from the time of the adoption of the resolution until the substantive session of the Council. This report focuses on the provisions that have been further implemented at the sessions of the Assembly and the Council in 1998 and in preparation for their sessions in 1999. The implementation of relevant paragraphs of Council resolution 1998/46 is also covered, with special emphasis on the functional commissions.

II. Recommendations

4. The recommendations made below are intended to promote further implementation of General Assembly resolution 50/227 and Economic and Social Council resolution 1998/46. These recommendations concern (a) the Assembly; (b) documentation; (c) the Council and its functional commissions; (d) inter-agency coordination; and (e) the relationship between the United Nations and the international finance and trade institutions.

(a) General Assembly

(i) The General Assembly could pursue the organization of panel discussions and interactive debates on well-focused areas of its work; special efforts should be made to have the Third Committee become more involved in these types of special events; similar events could take place at the special sessions of the Assembly on the review of the implementation of the outcome of major United Nations conferences and summits.

(ii) The Bureaux of the Second and Third Committees could draw lessons from the experiences of the two Bureaux of the fifty-third session, and continue to explore joint consideration of issues having both economic and social implications, as well as human rights perspectives.

(iii) Texts of resolutions could be made more focused, concrete and operational; the type of outcome could be related to the kind of mandate generated, for example, work programme for the secretariat, policy guidance to the United Nations system, recommendations to Governments and so forth.

(b) Documentation and related matters

(iv) Possibilities for consolidation of some of the reports that are requested every year should continue to be examined, in order that this may lead to better-focused documentation for intergovernmental consideration.

(c) Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary bodies

(v) The Economic and Social Council may wish to build on the progress made in the implementation of the recommendations in paragraph 39 of annex I to General Assembly resolution 50/227 regarding periodic meetings with the bureaux and the secretariats of the functional commissions, other subsidiary and related bodies and the relevant executive boards. The Council may wish to ask bureaux of functional commissions to ensure regular exchange of information on their work programmes, including a more systematic transmission of documentation to other subsidiary bodies when they are of relevance to their work (resolutions, plans of action, reports of the Secretary-General and of Special Rapporteurs and so on).

(vi) There may be further possibilities of streamlining and regrouping the agenda items in the general segment with the aim of ensuring that the Economic and Social Council's review of the work of its functional commissions is more in line with its managerial and oversight functions and with the objectives of General Assembly resolution 50/227. An improved consolidated report on the outcome of functional commissions could assist in this task. Consideration could also be given to the possibility of having a standing item in the Council's agenda on the review of the work of the functional commissions, under which the Council could carry out its responsibilities to harmonize and coordinate their work programmes.

(vii) The Economic and Social Council may wish to hold periodic open and informal dialogue sessions in order to provide a forum where best practices and lessons learned from both national experiences and development agencies could be discussed; such debates could benefit from the participation of experts and academicians, on the basis of equitable representation of regional groups, as well as of representatives of non-governmental organizations; the same would apply for the Council's subsidiary bodies.

(viii) The Economic and Social Council may wish to review the modalities of participation of non-governmental organizations at all Council meetings, as well as in the functional commissions.

(ix) The Economic and Social Council could also select topics on which several strands of work in various bodies are under way as reflected, for example, in the case where a Special Rapporteur has been appointed by the Commission on Human Rights, standard-setting is ensured by another or other subsidiary bodies and technical assistance delivered by United Nations funds and programmes; specific sessions or panels bringing these elements of such topics together would enable the harmonization of the United Nations approach and the strengthening of the policy of the Organization in these fields, while enhancing the Council's role as a body for coordination and overall guidance.

(x) The Economic and Social Council could encourage functional commissions to implement when they have not yet done so relevant provisions of Council resolution 1998/46 (annex II), in particular as it relates to the adoption of multi-year programmes of work and to the coordinated follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits.

(xi) In order for the Economic and Social Council to derive maximum benefit from the Committee for Development Policy, it should adopt the programme of work of the Committee at its substantive session in July rather than at its organizational session, thereby providing the Committee with sufficient time to prepare documentation and advice to the Council.

(xii) In order to enhance the effectiveness of the Economic and Social Council's work and its ability to deal with issues in a flexible manner over the course of a year, the President of the Council has suggested that the designations of the various sessions of the Council as being organizational, resumed organizational and substantive need not be retained; the Council shall continue to have an annual four-week session in July, alternately in New York and in Geneva as at present; the Council will also continue to elect its Bureau in January and will hold a meeting in early February to deal with organizational matters and one in May to conduct elections.

(d) Inter-agency coordination

(xiii) The Economic and Social Council could draw lessons from the experiences for the panels held in preparation of the high-level and coordination segments, and identify the most productive ways of ensuring the participation of high-ranking officials from United Nations agencies, funds and programmes and Secretariat departments in the Council sessions.

(e) Relationship between the United Nations and international finance and trade institutions

(xiv) The Economic and Social Council may wish to review the format and modalities of future meetings of the special high-level meeting proximate to the semi-annual meetings of the Bretton Woods institutions, in order, *inter alia*, to ensure a stronger focus on one or two major substantive issues, to ensure the provision of sufficient time to share views and to explore its relationship with the Council's high-level segment.

(xv) The Economic and Social Council could undertake a similar event with the trade institutions, particularly the United Nations Conference on Trade and

Development (UNCTAD) and World Trade Organization, and consider the socio-economic impact of trade policies, particularly in the framework of the forthcoming round of negotiations for trade liberalization.

III. Progress in the implementation of General Assembly resolutions 50/227 and 52/12 B and Economic and Social Council resolution 1998/46

5. The present section contains information on the status of implementation of General Assembly resolutions 50/227 and 52/12 B and Economic and Social Council resolution 1998/46. The dual-column layout has been provided for ease of reference. It should be noted that the left-side column does not necessarily follow the relevant paragraphs in a sequential manner. Where deemed appropriate, paragraphs that were seen as addressing similar issues have been grouped together in order to provide the Council with a clearer picture of the status of implementation on related matters. Furthermore, the paragraphs on (primarily), working methods addressed to the executive boards of the funds and programmes are treated separately in section III of this report and are therefore not covered in this section.

Provisions of General Assembly resolution 50/227, annex I	*Implementation*
I. Funding of operational activities for development of the United Nations system	
... the Economic and Social Council should consider, on an annual basis in the operational activities segment, the overall financial picture of the funds and programmes ... and make recommendations thereon to the General Assembly and the funds and programmes (para. 11).	Information on funding of operational activities for development are made available in the report of the Secretary-General submitted to the Economic and Social Council under its agenda item 3 (b) entitled "Operational activities of the United Nations for international development cooperation: follow-up to policy recommendations of the General Assembly".
The governing bodies of each programme and fund ... shall adopt ... a specific and realistic target for core resources ... in accordance with relevant decisions taken by the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, the governing bodies of each programme and fund shall take decisions on their own funding arrangements (para. 12).	The report of the Secretary-General on the 1998 triennial comprehensive policy review of the operational activities for development of the United Nations system (A/53/226 and Add.1–4) covers the recent consideration of the subject of core and non-core funding by the boards of the funds and programmes.
II. General Assembly	
The High-level Open-ended Working Group on the Strengthening of the United Nations System should be encouraged to consider ... promoting the use of innovative mechanisms, in accordance with the rules of procedure of the General Assembly ... (para. 19). The Secretariat and representatives of the specialized agencies are requested to provide executive briefings, as appropriate, on the matters to be covered under the items on the agenda, at least a week prior to the opening of the General Assembly (para. 31).	The fifty-third session of the General Assembly experienced a unique innovation in its methods of work thanks to the organization of a high-level meeting on "social and economic impact of globalization and interdependence and their policy implications", which consisted of a plenary debate, addressed by the Secretary-General, two ministerial round tables on national and international responses to globalization and two informal panels. These panels brought wider perspectives from the private sector, the academic world, trade unions and civil society at large. The role of the United Nations in addressing economic dimensions of development was clearly recognized by the Assembly, which decided to hold biannually a high-level dialogue on strengthening international cooperation for development, and to discuss again the ways of dealing with the financial crisis at its fifty-fourth session. Ten panel discussions and special events were organized, during which key issues in sustainable development, economic cooperation, poverty eradication and human rights were addressed and debated upon. The fact that a large number of participants in these events (approximately 35 per cent) came from outside the United Nations system added to the richness of the discussions. The President of the Economic and Social Council also made a special presentation to the Second Committee on poverty eradication.

Provisions of General Assembly resolution 50 227, annex I	*Implementation*
	The Secretary-General launched the International Year of Older Persons and the President of the General Assembly, in the presence of the Secretary-General and of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights opened the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, during which 120 Member States made statements. The Assembly also presented six United Nations human rights prizes, awarded to the recipients for their determination and courage. In addition, 17 executive briefings were held for delegations to the Second and Third Committees by high-level Secretariat officials, heads of agencies, funds and programmes, special representatives and rapporteurs.
There is a need to promote greater coherence and complementarity between the work of the Second and Third Committees (para. 21).	It is now established practice that the Bureaux of the Second and Third Committees meet to review their respective programmes of work in order to exchange information on the issues discussed in each, and to identify potential areas of overlap or duplication.
There is a need to consider possible measures to allow for the coordinated consideration of the report of the Economic and Social Council during the General Assembly session (para. 22).	The report of the Economic and Social Council is considered in four of the Main Committees and in the plenary meetings of the General Assembly. In this regard, consultations between the Bureau of the Council and the Bureaux of Second and Third Committees took place to discuss the coordinated consideration of the report.
To the extent feasible, the discussions in the Second and Third Committees should not commence until after the end of the general debate in the plenary meetings of the General Assembly (para.23).	The discussions in the Second and Third Committees commenced after the end of the general debate in the plenary meetings of the fifty-third session of the General Assembly.
For issues of a procedural nature, decisions, instead of resolutions, should be used to the maximum extent possible. Resolutions should be shorter, in particular as regards preambular parts. The bureaux, in reviewing the respective agendas, could identify and recommend those individual items or clusters of related items that could be effectively considered in omnibus resolutions (para. 24).	The number of resolutions adopted by the Second Committee was reduced from 46 in 1994 to 31 in 1997 and 33 in 1998. The Third Committee also achieved a significant reduction in the number of its resolutions, from 71 in 1994 to 69 in 1997 and 59 in 1998, 31 of which were adopted under agenda item 110 entitled "Human rights questions".

Provisions of General Assembly resolution 50 227, annex I	*Implementation*
To facilitate discussions based on an integrated approach to development issues, the possibility of choosing a principal theme or themes should be explored to focus substantive debate under each "cluster" in the agenda without prejudice to the right of delegations to raise any other specific issue in the debates (para. 27).	Pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 48/264 of 29 July 1994 and 51/241 of 31 July 1997, the Second and Third Committees have made a further attempt to focus the debate under clusters and sub-clusters of the agenda. The Third Committee at the end of each session devotes one or two meetings to a full discussion of its agenda and measures to improve its modus operandi. Its work has been organized in two clusters (social and related issues; and human rights and related issues) and some items are twinned (drugs and crime, advancement of women and follow-up to the Beijing conference). Informal consultations were held before the start of the general debate.
Consultations should be held at an early stage, in an organizational session of the Committee, before the start of its general debate, based on proposals from the bureau for decision, on clustering of the agenda, and, where possible, on themes and focus for these clusters, taking into account the content of reports presented, as well as on items to be included for discussion or items for decisions and resolutions without formal debate (para. 28).	Biennialization of agenda items has been introduced at the fifty-first and fifty-second sessions of the General Assembly. No additional item was included in the agenda of the Second Committee at the fifty-third session. The review of operational activities is carried out on a triennial basis. In 11 resolutions (out of 33) adopted by the Second Committee and 10 by the Third Committee at the fifty-third session, the review of the implementation of the resolution and a report of the Secretary-General at the fifty-fifth session or later were requested. Within the Third Committee, several requests for reports were addressed to Special Rapporteurs of the Commission on Human Rights. In other resolutions, a report to a subsidiary body was requested. However, it appears difficult at this stage to further biennialize or triennialize agenda items and reporting requirements.

Provisions of General Assembly resolution 50 227, annex I	*Implementation*
III. Documentation and related matters	
There should be greater use of relevant background documents in the Second Committee such as the *World Economic and Social Survey*, the *Trade and Development Report*, the *World Development Report* and the *World Economic Outlook*; in the preparation of the first two reports, cooperation and coordination between the Department of Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis and the secretariat of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development should be enhanced to ensure more complementarity between the reports (para. 32).	The *World Economic and Social Survey* is made available to the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council and an update is submitted to the Second Committee. In addition, the *Trade and Development Report* and the *World Development Report* are made available to the Second Committee. The *World Economic Outlook* is issued twice a year in May and October. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat (in which the Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis was merged) and UNCTAD have undertaken a review of their activities in the macroeconomic area in order to strengthen their cooperation. As a result, a joint report on the world economic situation and prospects will be issued each year to replace both part one of the *World Economic and Social Survey* and the report of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs on the State of the World Economy. The report will help to ensure analytical consistency and policy coherence for all United Nations macroeconomic work and serve as the global overview for the preparation of regional economic surveys and other relevant United Nations reports. The first joint report on the *World Economic Situation and Prospects for 1999* was issued this year. The *World Economic and Social Survey* will focus primarily on the integrated analysis of economic and social development at the global and national levels, while the *Trade and Development Report* will focus on the integrated treatment of development and interrelated issues in the areas of trade, finance, technology and investment.
Efforts should ... continue to be made to have all documentation available in electronic form, in particular for distribution on the Internet, in a timely manner and within existing resources (para.33).	Following the information technology plan set up by the Secretary-General to provide all permanent missions to the United Nations and the wider public with on-line access to documents and relevant United Nations information, documents and reports have increasingly been made available in the optical disk system and on the Internet in an advanced unedited form. Each functional commission of the Economic and Social Council has its own Web page which includes the documentation of the Commission's latest sessions, as has the Council which, in addition to its pre-sessional documentation, will have its July 1999 high-level segment covered "live" on the Internet.

Provisions of General Assembly resolution 50/227, annex I	*Implementation*
	The Technical Sub-group of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Informatics has also continued its work on related issues.
In order to rationalize and simplify reporting procedures, the Second and Third Committees shall, at the end of their sessions, while reviewing their draft programmes of work for the next sessions, consider procedural decisions regarding requests for reports, including where possible integrated reports on closely related items, as well as items to be inscribed on the agendas for the next sessions (para. 34).	The Committees have continued to follow the practice of reviewing all requests for reports. However, progress in this regard has been limited thus far.
	IV. Economic and Social Council
In the follow-up to United Nations conferences, the Council shall ensure the harmonization and coordination of the agendas and work programmes of the functional commissions by promoting a clearer division of labour among them and providing clear policy guidance to them ... The Council could periodically organize meetings on specific issues to allow for more dialogue with the chairpersons and the secretariats ... of the functional commissions, other subsidiary and related bodies and the relevant executive boards ... (para. 39).	A consolidated report on the outcomes of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council in 1998 (E/1999/3) was submitted to the Council to assist its coordination role by highlighting the linkages, complementarities and overlaps in the work of subsidiary bodies and major policy issues arising from them. In its resolution 1999/1, the Council welcomed most of the recommendations contained in the report. It provided guidance on how to ensure better harmonization and coordination of the work programmes of the functional commissions. The Council's guidance was transmitted to the functional commissions. The Council also requested the Secretary-General to prepare a further consolidated report on the work of the functional commissions of the Council in 1999 for consideration at its substantive session. Considerable progress has been made in this regard, particularly through joint meetings of the Bureau of the Economic and Social Council with bureaux of the functional commissions. Such meetings were held with all New York-based commissions, and videoconferences were organized with other Geneva- and Vienna-based commissions. The main objectives were to provide a follow-up on the recommendations of the Council and to ensure the integrated follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits as well as the continuity of the functional commissions' bureaux. Ambassador Valdivieso and Ambassador Mangoaela, Vice-Presidents of the Council, will present a report to the Council on these meetings. In addition, a number of bilateral/trilateral meetings among functional commissions were held.

Provisions of General Assembly resolution 50 227, annex I	*Implementation*
The outcome of each segment of the Council should be strengthened and made more action-oriented. Resolutions, decisions and agreed conclusions should be implemented and followed up fully by all relevant parts of the United Nations system. This process should be monitored by the Council and the General Assembly on a regular basis, as appropriate (para. 44).	The high-level segment resulted in a ministerial communiqué for the first time at the Council's substantive session of 1998. The organization of five panels in preparation for the high-level segment in 1999 and advance informal consultations are intended, along with adopting the communiqué in a timely manner, to strengthen the outcome of this segment by making it more action-oriented. The coordination and the humanitarian segments adopted agreed conclusions on, respectively, the coordination of the policies and activities of the specialized agencies and other bodies of the United Nations system related to the coordinated follow-up to and implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (agreed conclusions 1998/2) and on special economic, humanitarian and disaster relief assistance (agreed conclusions 1998/1). A follow-up report to the outcome of the coordination segment is submitted to the Council. Under its operational activities for development segment, the Council adopted resolution 1998/42 of 31 July 1998 which contributed to the preparation of the triennial comprehensive policy review. Letters by the President of the Economic and Social Council drawing attention to the ministerial communiqué and to the agreed conclusions adopted at the coordination segment were sent to the Chairpersons of the executive boards of the United Nations funds and programmes and of the functional commissions of the Council, as well as to the executive heads of the specialized agencies and the executive secretaries of regional commissions. Letters were also sent to the Bretton Woods institutions and the regional banks. As an example of a follow-up by a specialized agency, the secretariat of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) brought to the attention of UNESCO's member States the outcome of the Council's session, drawing their attention to the Council's decisions that were of relevance to the work of the organization. In accordance with its agreed conclusions 1998/1, the Economic and Social Council held informal consultations on how to improve the humanitarian segment and adopt decision 1999/208 of 5 February 1999.

Provisions of General Assembly resolution 50 227, annex I	*Implementation*
The theme for the general debate of the high-level segment shall be determined ... (para. 53).	The Council decided on the themes for the high-level and coordination segments of its 1999 substantive session at its substantive session of 1998 (Council decision 1998/298 of 5 August 1998). At its organizational session for 1999, the Council requested the Committee for Development Policy to consider the theme of the 1999 high-level segment. However, in view of the limited time available to do so, it is advisable that in future the programme of work of the Committee be determined at the substantive session of the Council rather than at the organizational session. Proposals for a theme for 2000 will be presented to the Council at its substantive session in 1999.
The Secretary-General is requested to include in his report for this (high-level) segment all relevant issues that could be discussed during the session ... making use of inputs from the various pertinent bodies of the United Nations system ... (para. 54). In order to better focus the policy dialogue, the possibility of having joint reports, prepared by the secretariats of the United Nations, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization, should be explored (para. 55).	The report of the Secretary-General on the theme of the 1999 high-level segment, namely, "The role of employment and work in poverty eradication: the empowerment and advancement of women", was prepared by the secretariat of the International Labour Organization (ILO) with inputs from the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, UNDP, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). A note by the Secretary-General transmitted the report, jointly prepared by the secretariats of UNCTAD and the World Trade Organization, on "Market access: developments since the Uruguay Round, implications, opportunities and challenges, in particular for the developing countries and the least developed among them, in the context of globalization and liberalization" (E/19998/55) which was submitted to the high-level segment of 1998.
The outcome of the high-level segment should normally be in the form of agreed conclusions and should be followed up by all relevant bodies and organizations of the United Nations system (para. 56). (This paragraph is closely related to para. 44: see above.)	The Economic and Social Council adopted agreed conclusions 1997/1 following its 1997 high-level segment and a ministerial communiqué in 1998. The latter has been brought to the attention of all relevant bodies and organizations of the system and of the General Assembly as part of the annual report of the Council to the Assembly. The Assembly, in its resolution 53/169 of 15 December 1998 on the role of the United Nations in promoting development in the context of globalization and interdependence, referred to the ministerial communiqué and requested the Secretary-General to report to the Assembly on its implementation.

Provisions of General Assembly resolution 50 227, annex I	*Implementation*
The agreed conclusions of the Council concerning the selection of cross-cutting themes common to major international conferences and/or the contribution to an overall review of the implementation of the programme of action of a United Nations conference should be implemented. At the organizational session of the Council, consideration should be given to choosing a second theme dealing with concrete sectoral issues (para. 57).	Pursuant to Economic and Social Council agreed conclusions 1995/1 on coordinated follow-up by the United nations system and implementation of the results of the major international conferences organized by the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields, the Council decided on the theme for the coordination segment of its 1999 substantive session: "Development of Africa: implementation and coordinated follow-up by the United Nations system of initiatives on African development". No sectoral theme was chosen. Proposals for a theme for the coordination segment in 2000 will be presented to the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1999.
The primary function of this (general) segment as that of an action-oriented review of the activities, reports and recommendations of the Council's subsidiary bodies should be consolidated, avoiding a repetition of the debates held in those bodies and focusing attention on major policy issues that require a prioritized and coordinated response from the United Nations system as a whole (para. 66).	The Secretary-General in his reform proposal noted that the general segment should be more focused and policy-oriented, giving sufficient attention to the linkages between the reports of the subsidiary bodies. The consolidated report on the outcome of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council in 1998 should assist the Council in its coordination role (E/1999/3). In his previous report on restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields (A/53/137–E/1998/66), the Secretary-General also recommended the further streamlining and regrouping of the agenda items in the general segment in order to increase the Economic and Social Council's managerial and oversight functions, in line with the objectives of General Assembly resolution 50/227.
The Council should regularly review the agenda of its general segment ... (para. 67).	The Economic and Social Council reviewed its agenda and related documentation requirements during the organizational session in February 1999.
The subsidiary bodies should be requested to include in their reports an executive summary .. and the issues that may require attention and/or action by the Council. The Secretariat should consolidate these issues in a single document ... (para. 68).	Only the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice provided such reporting requirement in 1998. In its resolution 1999/1 of 2 February 1999, the Economic and Social Council requested the functional commissions that had not yet done so to implement General Assembly resolution 50/227 with regard to the provision of summaries of their resolutions or decisions for action by and/or for the attention of the Council.

Provisions of General Assembly resolution 50 227, annex I	*Implementation*
V. Functional and regional commissions and expert groups	
The Council shall undertake ... a review of the mandates, composition, functions and working methods of its functional commissions and expert groups and bodies, ensuring more effective and coordinated discussions and outcomes of their work (paras. 70 and 71).	The Economic and Social Council adopted resolution 1998/46 for the measures for the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields whose annex II contains recommendations to be implemented with regard to the functional commissions of the Council with specific responsibilities for the follow-up to the major United Nations conferences.
In recent years, the functional commissions have taken an interest in reviewing their own working methods and should continue to do so, benefiting from the experience gained (Economic and Social Council resolution 1998/46, annex II, para. 1).	Functional commissions have gone through the process of rationalizing their methods of work. Some of them appointed special groups in order to make further proposals adapted to the specificities of the commission. For example, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs appointed a high-level group of experts to review and make proposals on the strengthening of the United Nations machinery for drug control, including the working methods of the Commission; the Commission on Human Rights is also going through a major review of human rights mechanisms, which embraces the working methods and procedures of the Commission.
Bearing in mind the interlinkages of issues and their cross-cutting nature, there is a need for the functional commissions to strengthen their coordination, while paying careful attention to the mandates and terms of reference of each commission. The Economic and Social Council has to play a key role in this process. In this context, adoption of a multi-year thematic programme for the functional commissions responsible for follow-up to the major conferences can be helpful (Economic and Social Council resolution 1998/46, annex II., sect. A, para. 2).	Several commissions adopted a multi-year programme of work, so as to provide a better follow-up to major United Nations conferences. For example, the Commission on the Status of Women adopted such a programme for a focused and thematic approach culminating in a review and appraisal of the Platform for Action adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women. Similar approaches were adopted by the Commission on Sustainable Development and the Commission on Population and Development. The Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice adopted a multi-year thematic programme by deciding on a special theme for each session of the Commission and identifying topics for special attention in the field of technical assistance (for example, "Prevention of crime" for the 1999 session of the Commission).

Provisions of General Assembly resolution 50 227, annex I	*Implementation*
	Coordination among functional commissions intensified in recent years through various ways. Mainstreaming a gender perspective as a common theme has made it possible to take into account the work of the Commission on the Status of Women in the activities of other commissions; to facilitate this process, the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women addressed the Commission on Human Rights and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice at their last sessions. Joint bureaux meetings of the functional commissions have also helped to increase coordination; for example, the Chairpersons of both the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, the two Vienna-based commissions, have been invited to attend the respective inter-sessional consultations meetings. The consolidated report prepared by the Secretariat on the reports of subsidiary bodies aims at assisting the Council and the functional commissions in identifying the areas of possible overlap between their activities. The report also makes proposals on ways to improve coordination. The Bureau of the Economic and Social Council took the opportunity of the joint meetings convened with the bureaux of the functional commissions to emphasize the need for increased interaction among Council subsidiary bodies. These meetings, a report of which will be made available to the Council, have stressed the relevance of a more systematic exchange of information between the functional commissions, the need for increased collaboration among the secretariats of these commissions and the Governments' responsibility for coordinating positions at the national level.
The Bureau plays a crucial role in the successful outcome of, and in facilitating the preparation for, the meeting. The incoming Bureau should preferably be elected immediately after the conclusion of the previous session of the Commission, as appropriate (Economic and Social Council resolution 1998/46, annex II, sect. B, para. 14).	Bureaux play a leading role in preparing for the sessions of the functional commissions. Most of them have held inter-sessional meetings during the period under review. The Bureau of the Commission on Human Rights, which was entrusted with reviewing human rights mechanisms, held monthly meetings between the fifty-fourth and fifty-fifth sessions of the Commission. The Bureau of the Commission on Sustainable Development was the only one to be elected immediately after the conclusion of the previous session of the Commission. However, in a draft resolution recommended to the Economic and Social Council for adoption at its 1999 session, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs also decided to adopt this practice.

Provisions of General Assembly resolution 50/227, annex I	*Implementation*
	That the Commission on the Status of Women elects its Bureau for a two-year period is also recalled. As a result of these endeavours, the work of the commissions is now perceived as ongoing, rather than limited to the dates of the commissions' formal sessions. This evolution facilitates the search for consensus as much as it enables further in-depth debates on the commissions' areas of work. The joint bureaux meetings of the Economic and Social Council with the functional commissions also stressed the need for continuity in the membership of the bureaux of the functional commissions.
The Economic and Social Council resolution stresses the need for in-depth and focused discussions and suggests the organization of panels of experts and inter-sessional meetings to help to identify key issues and solutions (Economic and Social Council resolution 1998/46, annex II, sect. A). The resolution also calls for a broad participation at the Commission sessions, including of officials from capitals responsible for the specific follow-up to United Nations conferences, as well as relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations (Economic and Social Council resolution 1998/46, annex II, sect. C).	Functional commissions have increasingly used panels and working groups to focus the debates on practical/technical issues and to benefit from relevant national experiences. For example, the Commission on Sustainable Development holds inter-sessional working groups on three major areas of its work. The Commission for Social Development, at its 1999 session, held a panel on basic education for all, in cooperation with UNICEF. Arrangements for increased dialogue with experts have also been included in the programmes of work of various commissions. For example, the Commission on Human Settlements devotes part of its high-level segment to a general debate with mayors, and arranges under various agenda items for a dialogue on substantive issues with local authorities and other partners. The Commission on the Status of Women also devotes time to presentations by experts from national machineries for the advancement of women. These experts are selected by regional groups for a structured dialogue on national experiences and good practices in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. The level of participation in the work of the functional commissions as in that of the Economic and Social Council has greatly improved over the past few years with high-level officials from capitals attending increasingly and regularly the meetings of these bodies.

Provisions of General Assembly resolution 50 227, annex I	*Implementation*
	The number of non-governmental organizations attending the various commissions' sessions has never been as high as this year. In some cases, it has even proved difficult to accommodate the requests of non-governmental organization representatives to take the floor. Although positive in that it reflects considerable interest on the part of civil society, this has raised some concerns on the appropriate modalities for the participation by non-governmental organizations. As for intergovernmental organizations, the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD/DAC) has continued to participate at the sessions of the Statistical Commission and at the Economic and Social Council's informal meeting on the work being carried out by the United Nations system and other relevant international and national institutions on basic indicators to measure progress towards the implementation of the integrated and coordinated follow-up of all aspects of major United Nations conferences and summits.
The Council shall provide for the review of the regional commissions ... (paras. 74 and 75).	The Economic and Social Council adopted resolution 1998/46 on further measures for the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields whose annex III contains measures to be implemented with regard to the regional commissions. Information on steps taken by the regional commissions in follow-up to this resolution will be made available in the report of the Secretary-General on regional cooperation in the economic, social and related fields to be reviewed by the Council in the general segment.

VI. Governing bodies of the United Nations development programmes and funds

(See section IV of the present report.)

VII. Inter-agency coordination

In the context of the discussions on an agenda for development, a close review shall be made of the relationship of the Economic and Social Council with the specialized agencies (para. 79).	In line with the agenda for development, adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 51/240, the Economic and Social Council has strengthened its role as a central mechanism for coordination of the United Nations system through increased interaction with the specialized agencies and the funds and programmes.

Provisions of General Assembly resolution 50 227, annex I	*Implementation*
	During the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council, executive heads of United Nations organizations interact actively with the Council in all segments; in this connection, two panels are being organized for the 1999 substantive session, which will involve a substantial number of executive heads; they will discuss how their organization works together with other parts of the system in promoting a concerted response by the system to the challenge of African development. Similar panels will be held in the humanitarian affairs segment of the Council, with selected Executive Heads of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and resident and/or humanitarian coordinators working in countries affected by natural disasters and complex emergencies. It is also recalled that the agencies make proposals for the themes of the high-level and coordination segments of the Economic and Social Council.
The Administrative Committee on Coordination should present the thematic aspects of its report to the Council at its coordination segment and the remaining parts at the general segment; the members of the Administrative Committee on Coordination should engage in an active dialogue with the Council on ways to improve inter-agency coordination (para. 81).	In response to the Economic and Social Council's request for regular briefings on the outcomes of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) session, the Secretary-General continued to address the Council at the organizational session for 1999, on 3 February 1999, on the work of ACC in 1999, and at the resumed organizational session, on 25 March 1999. A further briefing was given to the Council on 7 May on the outcome of the first regular session of ACC of 1999. The annual overview report of ACC, which is submitted to the general segment of the Economic and Social Council under the item on coordination, programme and other questions, enables the Council to engage in a more substantive interaction with ACC members; relevant sections of this report are also made available to other segments.

Provisions of General Assembly resolution 50 227, annex I	*Implementation*
The periodic meetings of all concerned senior secretariat officials in the economic and social sectors, under the authority of the Secretary-General, should continue to be used to improve coordination and performance; the outcomes of these meetings should be presented on a regular basis to the Economic and Social Council (para. 82).	The Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs and the Executive Committee of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) meet regularly to promote effective coordination among the substantive departments of the Secretariat and operational bodies. The former has produced a report entitled "Towards a new international financial architecture" made available to Member States in February 1999. An additional report on "Finding solutions to the debt problems of developing countries" was made available to Member States in May 1999. Information on the work of the Executive Committee of UNDG is included in the report on operational activities presented to the Economic and Social Council. The Senior Management Group (SMG) made up of the conveners of the four executive committees (peace and security, humanitarian affairs, economic and social affairs and development) and additional senior managers continues to meet on a regular basis as the Secretary-General's cabinet and the central policy planning body. The SMG also ensures coherence in the work of the four executive committees.
VIII. Relationship between the United Nations and international finance and trade institutions	
In order to improve communication and cooperation at the intergovernmental level between the Council and the international financial and trade institutions ... the Council should schedule periodically a high-level special meeting at a time proximate to the semi-annual meetings of the Bretton Woods institutions ... (para. 88).	As a result of the special high-level meeting of the Economic and Social Council with the Bretton Woods institutions in April 1998, the General Assembly in its resolution 53/172 invited the Secretary-General to support the Council in the organization of a second dialogue in 1999. In its resolution 53/169, the Assembly suggested that the dialogue address ways and means of optimizing the benefits and minimizing the negative consequences of globalization and interdependence, in particular for the developing countries.

Provisions of General Assembly resolution 50 227, annex I	*Implementation*
	The second high-level special meeting of the Economic and Social Council with the Bretton Woods institutions was held on 29 April 1999, following the meeting of the Development Committee of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. A brief background note identifying issues and questions on the theme "Functioning of international financial markets and stability in financing for development" was prepared by the United Nations in collaboration with the Bank and the Fund. The meeting was well attended by ministers and senior officials dealing with finance, economic and development cooperation matters. Among the topics under discussion, the need for social safety nets in the renewed financial architecture and the need for increased coherence and complementarity between the United Nations and the World Bank, including at the field level, were emphasized. Support was also expressed at the meeting for the financing for development process.

IV. Executive Boards of the United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Children's Fund and the World Food Programme

6. Paragraphs 76 through 78 of annex I to General Assembly resolution 50/227 contain provisions for the governing bodies of the United Nations development programmes and funds. In paragraph 76, the Assembly requested that the executive boards should consider adjustments to their agendas, reporting procedures and format, and that they should review the number and scheduling of meetings and sessions, with a view to continuing the rationalization of the working methods of the boards. In paragraph 77, the Assembly asked the governing bodies to describe in their reports how the overall policy guidance and coordination provided by the Assembly and the Economic and Social Council had been implemented, and to give specific recommendations for further action. In paragraph 78, the Assembly requested that the effective participation of observer member States and observer States in the sessions of the executive boards be facilitated and that their arrangements and working methods and their rules of procedure be reviewed. The following paragraphs summarize the efforts made by the executive boards to respond to these recommendations.

	UNDP UNFPA	*UNICEF*	*WFP*
Implementation of guidance from the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council[1]	Both organizations are guided by General Assembly resolutions on the triennial policy review of operational activities and by Economic and Social Council resolution 1998/27 of 28 July 1998 on reporting of the United Nations funds and programmes to the Council. In 1999, they were also guided by Council resolution 1998/44 of 31 July 1998 on the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits. The agreed conclusions of the humanitarian segment of the Council in 1998 and Assembly resolution 53/192 of 15 December 1998 provided a strong legislative basis for the integration of operational activities and humanitarian assistance, an area reported to the Executive Board by both organizations. In accordance with Assembly resolution 50/227, the Executive Board has adopted legislation determining funding strategies for both organizations during 1998 and early 1999. In its decision 98/23 of 23 September 1998, the Executive Board decided that UNDP should develop a multi-year funding framework that integrated programme objectives, resources, budget and outcomes, with the objective of increasing core resources, to be presented to the Executive Board at its third regular session of 1999. The first funding meeting was held at the second regular session of 1999.	At its first regular session of 1999, the Executive Board discussed UNICEF follow-up to the Council's resolutions related to operational activities of the United Nations for international development, including the coordination of United Nations funds and programmes at country and Headquarters level and the follow-up to the Beijing conference and to other United Nations conferences and summits. Accordingly, the Board reviewed and commented on eight country notes presented, and the regional summaries of mid-term reviews and major evaluations. The Board also adopted the resource mobilization strategy of UNICEF in the overall context of a strategic funding framework.	The WFP Executive Board now routinely establishes an annual work programme which includes the review of overall guidance and coordination provided by the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council and the Conference/Council of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and decisions by the Board on follow-up activities. Further to General Assembly resolution 48/162 of 20 December 1993, a working group was established in 1998 to review the Board's existing rules of procedure. The new rules, developed on the basis of best practices by the Economic and Social Council, FAO and other funds and programmes, were adopted by the Board at its first regular session in February 1999.

UNDP UNFPA	*UNICEF*	*WFP*
In its decision 98/24 of 23 September 1998, the Executive Board decided that UNFPA should develop a multi-year funding framework and, in decision 99/5 of 16 April 1999, requested the Executive Director to aim to submit to the Executive Board at its first regular session 2000 the first multi-year framework and decided to hold the first funding meeting at its second regular session 2000. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 52/188 of 18 December 1997, UNFPA reported to the Executive Board on the outcome of the International Forum on Follow-up to the International Conference on Population and Development, held at The Hague.		

	UNDP UNFPA	*UNICEF*	*WFP*
Rationalization of the working methods of the Boards	Three regular and one annual session were held in 1998, with the same planned for 1999. In 1998, 51 informal meetings were held, including those of the open-ended ad hoc working group on the funding strategy for UNDP. In 1999, as in 1998, the first regular sessions were devoted primarily to UNDP matters, while the second regular sessions were mainly devoted to UNFPA matters. The secretariat consults regularly with the secretariats of UNICEF and WFP to avoid overlap of meetings. An annual work plan for the Executive Board, approved in draft at the third regular session, and as a final version at the first regular session of a given year, ensures efficient and transparent planning for the year ahead. Items of concern to both UNDP and UNFPA are considered in joint segments (examples include reports to the Economic and Social Council, internal audit and oversight, reports of the Board of Auditors, field visits).	The 1999 programme of work of the Board was adopted at its second regular session in September 1998. It was decided that the burden of work could be accommodated in three sessions with a rationalization of agenda items, and a clustering of related items into sessions. The UNICEF secretariat continues to schedule pre-Board information meetings some weeks before the session, to allow more time for follow-up consultation between New York delegations and their capitals, and between delegations and the secretariat.	The Board normally holds one annual and three regular sessions per year. To increase cost-efficiency, the second regular and annual sessions are held back to back. Briefings are organized by the secretariat prior to each session. During 1998, the Bureau held nine meetings to establish a work plan, organize the sessions and promote dialogue. Three working groups were established in 1998, on resources and long-term financing, the distribution of seats and the rules of procedure. A total of 21 meetings were held in the course of the year. In order to acquaint new permanent representatives with the work of the programme, two pre-session briefings were held in 1998. During the session, statements and speeches are discouraged and debates are confined to the immediate subject at hand. The President also possesses new powers to propose time limits. At the end of each Board session, a brief paper containing key decisions and/or recommendations is endorsed by the Board. A brief summary is also sent to the members. the processing of documentation continues to be rationalized and all official Board documentation is posted on the WFP Web site in all four languages.

	UNDP UNFPA	*UNICEF*	*WFP*
Participation of observers	The UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board rules of procedure (DP/1997/32) adopted at the annual session of 1997 provide for the following in rule 16, paragraph 1: "Any State member of UNDP or UNFPA who is not a member of the Executive Board may attend Board meetings and, based on General Assembly resolutions 48/162 and 50/227, which, *inter alia*, call for the facilitation of the effective participation of observer Member States and observer States, may participate in its deliberations without the right to vote". All members of the Programme are invited to participate in the funding meetings of UNDP and UNFPA.	The rules of procedure for the Executive Board guarantees the right of participation of observers in all formal and informal sessions. Documentation is made available to the observers who express interest in receiving them. Advance copies of Board documents are posted on the UNICEF Intranet site for member and observer countries, UNICEF National Committees and country offices.	Member States who are not elected to the Board may opt to participate in the deliberations of the Board but without the right to vote. Observer delegations may also choose to receive all Board documentation relating to items on the provisional agenda. The participation of observers has been codified in the new rules of procedure adopted by the Executive Board in January 1999.

Notes

[1] A joint session of the UNDP/UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP Executive Boards was held on 25 January 1999, in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1995/51 of 28 July 1995. The meeting reviewed major areas of concerted action for 1999, including resource flows, follow-up to international conferences, use of common indicators, harmonization of programme cycles and common premises and services. The meeting also discussed the resident coordinator system, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and the Common Country Assessment, and links between development and humanitarian assistance.